

## **Public Media Code of Integrity**

Public broadcasters have adopted shared principles to strengthen the trust and integrity that communities expect of valued public service institutions. Public media organizations contribute to a strong civil society and active community life, provide access to knowledge and culture, extend education, and offer varied viewpoints and sensibilities. The freedom of public media professionals to make editorial decisions without undue influence is essential. It is rooted in America's commitment to free speech and a free press. It is reflected in the unique and critical media roles that federal, state, and local leaders have encouraged and respected across the years. It is affirmed by the courts.

Trust is equally fundamental. Public media organizations create and reinforce trust through rigorous, voluntary standards for the integrity of programming and services, fundraising, community interactions, and organizational governance.

These standards of integrity apply to all the content public media organizations produce and present, regardless of subject matter, including news, science, history, information, music, arts, and culture. These standards apply across all public media channels and platforms - broadcasting, online, social media, print, media devices, and in-person events. Public media, individually and collectively:

- \* Contribute to communities' civic, educational, and cultural life by presenting a range of ideas and cultures and offering a robust forum for discussion and debate.
- \* Commit to accuracy and integrity in the pursuit of facts about events, issues, and important matters that affect communities and people's lives.
- \* Pursue fairness and responsiveness in content and services, with particular attention to reflecting diversity of demography, culture, and beliefs.
- \* Aim for transparency in news gathering, reporting, and other content creation and share the reasons for important editorial and programming choices.
- \* Protect the editorial process from the fact and appearance of undue influence, exercising care in seeking and accepting funds and setting careful boundaries between contributors and content creators.
- \* Encourage understanding of fundraising operations and practices, acknowledge program sponsors, and disclose content-related terms of sponsor support.
- \* Maintain respectful and accountable relationships with individual and organizational contributors. \* Seek editorial partnerships and collaborations to enhance capacity, perspective, timeliness, and relevance and apply public media standards to these arrangements.
- \* Expect employees to uphold public media's integrity in their personal as well as their professional lives, understanding that employee actions, even when "off the clock," affect trust, integrity, credibility, and impartiality.
- \* Promote the common good, the public interest, and these commitments to integrity and trustworthiness in organizational governance, leadership, and management.

The Public Media Code of Integrity was developed by the Affinity Group Coalition and the Station Resource Group, collectively representing public television and radio stations and service organizations from across the country, with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. September 2013